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FIRST SHIPS, CONSTRUCTION ACHIEVEMENTS ON VOLGA-DON CANAL

[Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

On 31 May 1952, the waters of the Volga and the Don rivers met in the Volga-Don Canal between lock No 1 and lock No 2. On 1 June, the 1.5-kilometer-long canal below the Tsimlyanskaya Reservoir which connects locks No 14 and No 15, was also filled with water, thereby rendering the waterway from Krasnoarmeysk on the Volga to the Azov Sea navigable along its entire length.(1)

On 2 June, a vessel passed from the Tsimlyanskaya Reservoir into the lower Don through locks No 14 and No 15 and the connecting canal.(2) Diesel-propelled tug No 306 was the first vessel to start the westward journey from the Volga and through the locks of the canal. It had several floating docks in tow which were to be moored along the canal for passenger service.(1) The tug was at lock No 5 at 2000 hours, on 2 June (3), and at lock No 10 on 5 June.(4) By 17 June, the tug had safely completed its trip to Kalach-on-Don and back to Krasnoarmeysk and was already on its second voyage to Kalach. The steamer Akademik Lebedev arrived at Tsimlyanskiy Port from Kalach on 16 June.(5) On 14 June the steamer Akademik Vyshinskiy with a cargo of Ural lumber for the Donbass arrived at the watershed from Krasnoarmeysk.(6)

It is estimated that 40,000 cubic meters of water will be drained from the canal into the Volga for every vessel passing through the canal.(7)

The first aggregate of the Tsimlyanskaya GES was put into operation on 6 June and started supplying power to the transmission network of the Rostovenergo system.(8) By 16 June the aggregate had produced several million kilowatt-hours for the needs of Donbass mines, industrial centers, and villages of the Don Region. The additional power fed into the network from the GES improved power supply conditions considerably in the cities of Rostov-on-Don, Taganrog, Novocherkassk, and Novoshakhtinsk. In the meantime, installation and assembly work on the second and third aggregates of the GES is proceeding at full speed.(9)

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In the course of the construction of the Volga-Don Canal, 200 million cubic meters of earth were shifted, 40,000 tons of metallic structures installed (10), and 2.9 million cubic meters of concrete placed.(11)

The total capacity of all the electric motors used on the construction reached the capacity of the Volkhov GES, and the electric power consumed was as much as the power consumption of 15 large cities the size of Astrakhan', Poltava, and Zhitomir. The total rating of engines of all the motor vehicles including tractors amounted to over 500,000 horsepower. During construction, 16 automatic concrete-mixing plants were in operation day and night.

In addition to the building materials supplied for the construction locally, crushed stones were brought from Makhachkala, and stone was quarried near Pyatigorsk at the foot of the Beshtau Mountain and near the villages of Ust' Bystrinskaya, Repnaya, and Zhirnovo in Rostov Oblast'. Gravel was hauled from the Gul'kevich Quarry on the Kuban River and sand from Dubovka in Stalingrad Oblast.(10)

About 80 million cubic meters of earth were excavated and shifted to construct the Tsimlyanskaya hydraulic center. The rate of excavating and shifting reached 314,000 cubic meters every 24 hours. The total amount of concrete placed was 1,870,000,000 cubic meters. The construction of the center required 338,000 railroad carloads of building materials and equipment, including 10,000 carloads of metals. Very often, over 1,000 cars had to be unloaded in a day during the construction work.(8)

SOURCES

1. Moscow, Promyshlennost' Stroitel'nykh Materialov, 4 Jun 52
2. Moscow, Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 3 Jun 52
3. Moscow, Trud, 3 Jun 52
4. Moscow, Vechernyaya Moskva, 6 Jun 52
5. Trud, 17 Jun 52
6. Moskovskaya Pravda, 15 Jun 52
7. Moscow, Izvestiya, 1 Apr 52
8. Promyshlennost' Stroitel'nykh Materialov, 7 Jun 52
9. Moscow, Pravda, 16 Jun 52
10. Moscow, Ogonek, No 23, 1 Jun 52
11. Moscow, Nauka i Zhizn', No 5, May 52

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